

Project Review Routing Slip
for
Hawley Grade Slide Repair

Department/Name – <i>List appropriate members of the IDT to review project.</i>	Signature of Reviewer	Date	Comments Attached		Final Approval (date)
			Yes	No	
Botanist – Stu Osbrack	/s/ Stuart Osbrack	28 Feb 08		X	
Wildlife Biologist – Shay Zanetti	/s/ Shay Zanetti	03 Feb 08		X	
Fisheries Biologist - NA					
Monitoring - NA					
Hydrologist – Mary Moore	/s/ Mary Moore	26 Feb 08		X	
Cultural Resources Specialist - Michael Weichman	/s/ Michael Weichman	26 Feb 08		X	
Recreation Specialist – Bob Becker	/s/ Robert Becker	26 Feb 08		X	
Engineer – Garrett Villanueva	/s/Garrett Villanueva	26 Feb 08		X	
Vegetation Management - Rita Mustatia	/s/ Rita Mustatia	12 Mar 2008		X	
Urban Lots - NA					
Fire/Fuels Specialist - NA					
Scenic Resources – Daniel Cressy	/s/ Daniel Cressy	Feb. 26, 2008		x	
Roads, Trails and Facilities - Garrett Villanueva	/s/Garrett Villanueva	Feb. 26, 2008		x	
Other Specialist					
Other Specialist					
Planning – Matt Dickinson	/s/Matt Dickinson		x		17 Mar 2008
Staff Officer – Michael Gabor	/s/Mike Gabor		x		5/28/2008



USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit



Documentation of Decision for Implementation of
Hawley Grade Slide Repair Project
El Dorado County, California

BACKGROUND:

Hawley Grade was originally constructed around 1857 and used as the main route from Echo Summit to Lake Valley, and on through to Luther Pass. Discovery of silver in Nevada's Comstock in 1859 led a congested stream of prospectors east over this road into the valley. Pony Express riders galloped over the route in 1860-1861. When Johnson Grade was reconstructed in 1861, that became the main route into Lake Tahoe and Hawley Grade became relatively unused for travel, but as the years went on, became a popular hiking trail for area locals. In 1979, the 1.8 mile Hawley Grade Trail was awarded the honor of becoming a National Recreation Trail, which recognizes exemplary trails of local and regional significance. Through designation, these trails are recognized as part of America's national system of trails.

In 1997, a landslide destroyed a 75-foot section of the Hawley Grade Trail. It is believed that the slope failed due to saturation of the soils beneath the original trail. The original trail for this section was not equipped with drainage, the trail surface would collect and hold water, causing subsurface saturation and eventually slope failure. The Forest Service constructed a trail above the slide area, connecting to the trail segments on each side of the slide path. This steep re-routed section was meant to be a temporary patch until a better constructed trail could be built. The reroute does not allow drainage and has adverse grades.

PURPOSE AND NEED:

The purpose of this project is to rebuild a 75-foot section of the Hawley Grade trail that was destroyed in a rock slide.

There is a need to restore the trail's drainage functions, provide the general public with a safe hiking trail gradient, and restore the trail's historical significance.

PROPOSED ACTION:

It is my decision to implement the repair of a 75 foot section of the Hawley Grade Trail (Forest Service trail #18E10) that was destroyed as a result of a mass wasting event in 1997. This project is within the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) and is

located approximately 0.5 miles east of Benwood Meadow near the base of Echo Summit at T.11.N, R.18E, Sec.18. See attached Map.

My decision includes the following project actions:

- 1) Construction of a native rock retaining wall, which will be similar to the original wall.
- 2) Backfilling with native material behind the new wall.
- 3) Removal of 4 trees: 30", 24", 22" and 18" DBH, Jeffery Pine, on the disturbed, unstable slope.
- 4) Re-contouring the hillside above the project area, including decommissioning of the temporary trail.

The proposed project will rebuild the destroyed section of trail to its original location. This will involve rebuilding the rock retaining wall using native stone and will be similar to the original wall; however, the new section will be distinguishable by signage from the historic sections. Proposed wording for signage is "A landslide destroyed this section of trail in 1997. Repairs were made by the LTBMU in 2008". Significant quantities of rock are available for this project within 500 feet of the project site. The retaining wall will be backfilled with material gained by re-contouring the slope up to 50 feet above the wall. This rehabilitation will require the removal of 4 trees on the disturbed, unstable slope. Currently, these trees have a low probability of survival, due to exposed roots, unstable soils, and the steepness of the slope.

Hand crews and potentially a mini-excavator with rubber tracks will be utilized to reduce the amount of disturbance in the reconstruction area. Blasting may be necessary depending upon unforeseen site conditions. All Forest Service protocols for blasting would be followed including public safety and notification requirements.

The new section of trail will have improved drainage, a more acceptable gradient, and provide for better public safety. The reconstruction date is planned for July 2008. There will be a need to temporarily close this trail for 2 days for public safety. Temporary BMPs (Best Management Practices) will be installed during the reconstruction on the trail. Anticipated temporary BMPs include: coir logs and covering stockpiled soils. The trail will otherwise remain open, but under construction for the duration of the project. The project is expected to take 2 to 3 months to complete.

REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION:

I have concluded that this proposal falls within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service NEPA Handbook (FSH) that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment. There are no extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of the following category: FSH 1909.15 Chapter 30, Section 31.12, Category #4 "Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries".

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES:

This project is Categorically Excluded based on the following analysis there are no extraordinary circumstances:

1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – Based on internal scoping with the Wildlife Biologist, there will be **no effect** to Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species because habitat will be avoided, limited operational periods will be used, or **no presence exists**. Please see Document #3 for additional information.
2. Flood plains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds – There is no effect on Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds because project is not located in floodplains or wetlands and water quality will not be impacted.
3. Congressionally Designated Areas – Project area is not within a Congressionally Designated Area – this trail is not congressionally designated.
4. Inventoried Roadless Area – Project area is not within an Inventoried Roadless Area.
5. Research Natural Area – Project area is not within a Research Natural Area.
6. American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – Project area is not an American Indian or Alaska Native religious or cultural site.
7. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – This project is a National Recreation Trail. Based on internal scoping with the Heritage Resources Program staff and a consult with SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office), Document #2, the Project is in compliance with all recommendations. These include recreating the trail with an accurate appearance of the non-surviving property in material, design, color, and texture, and clearly identifying the reconstruction as a contemporary recreation.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS:

This project is consistent with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Land and Resource Management Plan (1988), as required by the National Forest Management Act and LTBMU's Forest Plan Consistency Review, Document # 1. Project location is in the Tahoe Valley Management Area (south half) and the Resource Management Emphasis states "Within much of the area the emphasis will be upon meeting the recreation, scenic and special uses demands of the large visiting and urban population that is in the area". This proposal furthers the resource management emphasis by maintaining or achieving environmental standards.

This project is exempt from TRPA review pursuant to the 1989 Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and TRPA. The proposed project falls within the standards as noted in Section III Exempt Activities, subsection D. Roads and Trails #2: "Reconstruction of roads, trails, bridges, and parking facilities..." The project will not increase capacity; the reconstructed trail will remain in substantial conformance with

the original trail in the area, height, volume and land coverage and will be retrofitted with drainage features.

Reviews were conducted by Forest Service specialists to evaluate potential impacts of this project relative to the Federal Endangered Species Act (PL93-502) and for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). This decision is consistent with the Endangered Species Act and Section 106 of the NHPA. A biological assessment (BA), biological evaluation (BE), and heritage resources review was completed for this project. See “Extraordinary Circumstances” section of this document.

Forest Service Manual (FSM) direction (FSM 2670) also requires analysis of impacts on Management Indicator Species (MIS). Based on internal scoping with the Wildlife Biologist, there will be **no effect** to Management Indicator Species because habitat will be avoided, limited operational periods will be used, or **no presence exists**.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

Internal scoping for this action was done through discussion with line officers, Heritage, Botanical, Wildlife, Recreation, and Engineering departments.

SHPO has been consulted and provided written comments and concurrence on a Finding of No Adverse Effect.

Listed in from Oct 07 through April 1, 2008 - SOPA report.

Public comment has been sought through individual stakeholders.

Shirley Taylor – supportive

John Drum – supportive

IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

The project may be implemented immediately. It is anticipated the project will begin in July 2008.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES:

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f) as it is a decision “for actions that have been categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS in FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, section 31.”

CONTACT PERSON:

For more information concerning this decision contact:

Garrett Villanueva - Civil Engineer

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

35 College Drive

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Phone (530)543-2762, E-mail gvillanueva@fs.fed.us

SIGNATURE AND DATE:

I have determined that this decision may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment as it is within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR part 1b.3 or one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15 sections 31.12 or 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action.

My conclusion is based on information presented in this document, my familiarity with the project areas and the entirety of the project file.

APPROVED BY:

/s/Terri Marceron
TERRI MARCERON
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
Forest Supervisor

5/30/2008
DATE